

ANNUAL DIVERSITY COUNCIL REPORT (YEAR 2000)

Council Members for the year 2000:

Velvet Torain – Chairperson
Annette Kirshner – Vice Chairperson
Donna – Letvinchick – Secretary

Alma Britton, Joyce Daye, Veronica Godfrey (Blacks in Government Observer), Rita Hanson, Clyde Hasty, Gail Kestner, Linwood Koonce, Carolyn London (HRMB Representative), Jim Mason, Valeria Shropshire, Deepak Srivastava, Molly Vallant, Helen Watson (Union Representative) and Jennifer Anderson (EEO Representative), Carol Bennett, Bradley Collins, Tommy Gates, George Kimble, and Rickie Moore.

January: A meeting was not held due to inclement weather.

- Martin Luther King, Jr. Observances - Due to the inclement weather and subsequent closing of the Institute, our planned speaker, Ms. Miriam Thomas, News Anchor from Channel 11 (ABC) could not give her presentation.

February: The first formal meeting was held on February 9, 2000 in the private dining room. The new members were introduced. The goals and functions of the DC were reviewed. Changes to the bylaws that were introduced at the December 1999 meeting were discussed. The two new subcommittees, Communications and Training were discussed. All members were asked to consider what committees they would like to work with.

The Communications Committee will focus on new ways to announce up-coming DC events and encouraging better attendance at each event. Some ideas that came out of this committee were:

1. Ask for a direct independent link on the JUNCTION. Currently the DC homepage is accessed through the EEO homepage.
2. Place announcements in the Factor and OM Grapevine as early as possible.
3. Ask Dr. Olden to send personal invitations to the DC events to the Executive Committee, and supervisors.

The Training Committee will focus on training for the Institute and DC members about diversity within the workplace. One major idea that came out of this committee was a workshop to focus on positive experiences within an Individual's workstation that can be imitated throughout the Institute. This workshop did not materialize because of logistical issues.

The committee reports were as follows:

- Black History Month - Dr. Keith Wailoo will speak February 23, from 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. in the Private Dining Room. His topic will be, "The Biography of Disease: Historical Perspectives on Medicine, Technology, in American Society." Dr. Wailoo has dual appointments in the Departments of Social Medicine and History at UNC. Posters reflective profiles of "Most Admired Scientists" done over the last 4 years by the EEO office will be displayed in the main lobby throughout the month.

March: This meeting was held on March 14, 2000 in the private dining room.

Dona McNeil shared some information on a possible presentation by Laura Saeger, Director of Events and Group Sales at Exploris. (Children's "Learning about the World's Diversity" Museum) Former Associate Director for the Friday Center, UNC, Div Cont Ed and a Certified Meeting Professional & holds a certification in Meeting Management

Issue - How to Keep DC Events Fresh and Compelling.
Program:

1. Steps involved in planning a successful event w/handout
2. Using technology to enhance your event
3. How to match the audience, the event, and the activities
4. How to make the experience fun/exciting, get those scientists to come out of their labs.

This would be a 1-hour information session of discussion & questions & answers to be presented in May. Discussion ensued among DC members and a vote was taken. 11 members in favor; 3 opposed. A motion was taken and seconded, to go ahead with this event.

A vote to change the wording of the duties of the Council Chairperson in the by- was taken. A quorum was present and the motion was carried and approved. The new wording will be posted in the By-laws. See web cite for specific wording.

A vote to change the wording under Voting in the By-laws was taken. A quorum was present and the motion was carried and approved unanimously. The new wording will be posted in the By-laws. See web cite for specific wording.

Pictures were taken to up-date the DC homepage and to have new posters made.

Black History Month - On 2/23/00 in the Private Dining Room, Dr. Keith Wailoo presented a talk on "The Biography of Disease: Historical Perspectives on Medicine, Technology, and American Society". Basically, he spoke on the history of diseases and the testing/surveys/impact on certain cultures. Photos were submitted to NIH for the Record.

April: This meeting was held on April 11, 1000 in the private dining room. By this time the posters with the year 2000 DC members were posted throughout the Institute.

The Hispanic Task Force Committee has been recharged to the Diversity Council. Marian Johnson-Thompson is the former chair of this committee. This Task Force was started at the Department Level by a Presidential Executive Order. Responsibilities include equal employment opportunity, education (within the Institute and as a community outreach), breaking the language barrier, and others. One outcome of this task force has been the development of the kid's web page in Spanish. Velvet is in the process of gathering information about the Task Force and determining what action the DC will take. Eventually, we will need to form a committee within the DC to handle this new responsibility. Velvet also plans to discuss the issue with Francine Little.

There is now a direct link to the DC on the web between EEO and Initiatives on the Junction Home Page. On April 18, Velvet will meet with Francine Little to obtain permission to send out email announcements with the following restrictions - no surveys, no tidbits, web sites, games, etc., and that the DC would send out no more than three announcements: 2 weeks prior to event, 1 day before event and the day of event.

Miriam Thomas had to cancel her talk due to illness. The video "Women in Science" was shown and refreshments served in the Conference Room. Approximately 50 people were in attendance. Two videos were also shown in the lobby from 11:30 am - 1:00 p.m. on 3/15/00 and 3/29/00.

There are plans to have the DC sponsor diversity training to the Institute. The Committee has been working with Human Resources on this initiative. Phil Lenowitz from Human Resources shared with the DC the idea of training under the concept of "appreciative inquiry". This is the process of finding out what the successes are and trying to replicate them - find out what works best when genders work together. Identify/Analyze Cause/Analyze Solutions/Action Plan. Learn to appreciate the best of what is and envision what the future looks like and what it can be. Mystery to be embraced; focus on positive; value difference.

May: This meeting was held on May 9, 2000.

Dona McNeill introduced Ms. Laura, Director of Events and Group and Ms. Flora, Assistant to the President for Management at who gave a on planning meetings/events. three main focal points for an event are skills, realms, and themes.

Asian Pac. Islander Month was celebrated on 5/23/00 in the Private Dining Room at 2:30 p.m. Two countries will be featured for this event - Australia and Korea. Speakers will be Dr. Padmini Kedar -Australia; Drs. Ja-Seok "Peter" Koo and Seung-Joon Baek Korea. There will be food representative of these countries and the cafeteria will also provide food relative to this theme.

Velvet Torain met with Francine Little on 4/18 to obtain permission to send out all hands email announcement for the DC. Francine Little denied our request. It was decided to continue to advertise our events through regular channels.

June: This meeting was held on June 13, 2000.

Jim Mason was working with Phil Lenowitz (HRMB) to arrange for Marge Shuler, a consultant, to visit in October to train and work with a core group of approximately 20 people who will be canvassers. This training will be a half-day. Once trained, these 20 people will interview employees at the Institute and ask questions under the concept of "appreciative inquiry" with the goal to summarize their stories, develop themes and assemble all of this information into

one document to be used as a resource tool. The DC would be polled first to see how many are interested in being a part of the core group and then other NIEHS staff will be asked to fill the remaining vacancies. Another smaller sub-committee would also be formed to get the questions together. Completion for this project is anticipated for February 2001.

Velvet asked the DC members for feedback regarding the presentation last month from staff of EXPLORIS, Ms. Laura Saegar, Director of Events and Group Sales and Ms. Flora Moorman, Assistant to the President for Management. DC members enjoyed the presentation and felt some of the ideas presented were currently being implemented; such as, using themes, serving food and audience participation. Members were also asked if the DC would benefit from having training of this nature again. Most thought the idea of training was good but maybe of a different topic.

Velvet asked the DC "What would you like to see the Council doing?" The DC currently feels they are fulfilling the Institute's mission statement and received feedback that Dr. Olden is pleased with our efforts. Future ideas that came up was to focus on ideas and concerns specifically dealing with communication across cultures, brown bag lunches with staff to get their ideas on future events and possible training and also to hold one large "festival." It was decided to wait and see how the "appreciative inquiry" interviews results are before moving forward with any of these ideas.

Asian Pacific Islander Month was celebrated May 23 in the Private Dining Room with two countries presented, Korea and Australia. Hand outs were also available to those attending, as well as a variety of foods, native to both countries, served. The event was well attended.

July: A meeting was not held in July.

August: This meeting was held on August 8, 2000,

Jennifer Anderson introduced Tom Hawkins who has accepted the position of NIH Catalyst. The NIH Catalyst position is an outgrowth of the NIH Workplace Diversity Initiative. He will be the link between NIH and NIEHS and bring ideas from the DC to NIH. Part of his assignment will be to structure a project/activity such as the Diversity Training, but probably something along the lines of written communication since that is his background. Tom is open to

suggestions/ideas for a project, and may call on other members for assistance.

The NIEHS Peer Awards policy and procedures information sheet was passed around. Voting members consist of one representative from OD, OM, DERT, two representatives from DIR and one representative from the DC. Valeria Shropshire gave an overview of how the peer awards committee functions. Velvet asked for volunteers to serve on this prestigious committee. Gail Kestner volunteered to serve as the main member with Molly Vallant and Clyde Hasty as alternates.

Velvet Torain, Diversity Council Chairman, updated members on her meeting with Dr. Olden, stating Dr. Olden was pleased with the DC. Velvet and Dr. Olden discussed ways to increase event participation. Dr. Olden stated that he would send out a personal email to the Executive Committee regarding our events in order to help increase awareness and support among senior staff. Dr. Olden plans to attend the September meeting and Velvet urged members to think of any questions or comments for Dr. Olden.

Marge Shiller, a consultant, will train potential interviewers during a "Gender Plus" workshop on October 26, 2000 at the Institute. An email went out to query the DC as to availability/interest - only 10 people responded (5 positive, 5 negative). It was suggested that perhaps an additional email be sent to special interest groups, such as the Trainees Assembly, Women Scientists, etc. requesting potential interviewers. The training is based on affirmative inquiry consisting of three steps: 1) Interested employees will be trained on how to interview; 2) trained interviewers will talk with up to 25 co-workers over a period of 2-3 months to gather information on positive or negative experiences at NIEHS; and 3) the interviewers will meet to assemble all information and develop themes to be used as a resource tool for future planning.

September: This meeting was held on September 12, 2000.

Dr. Olden spoke to the DC. He said that he was well aware of all the activities planned by the DC and praised the leadership. He stated that he was impressed with the program and stressed the importance of highlighting the many differences and divergencies. He was appreciative and supportive of the DC. Dr. Olden indicated feedback he was getting was that things are better now than they ever have been. He also stated that the Institute is doing well and he expected that the budget would fair well again this year.

Hispanic Heritage Month - This event was co-sponsored with DIR. Spain will be highlighted. There were posters at both campuses as well as a bulletin board display in the lobby of South Campus and in the glass case display outside the cafeteria. On 9/25, Ms. Ana Bernad-Colhoun, from Chapel Hill, NCI talked on the Diversity of Spain; On 9/27 there was be a lunch time slide show; On 9/29, Dr. Ken Ramos, from Texas A&M, presented a seminar "Latin Flavor in American Science: A perspective into molecular Vascular and Renal Biology" and Dr. Leslie Recio, CIIT, RTP, will present "Genotoxic Stress, Altered Gene Expression, and Tumor Development in p53 +/- mice". There were cheeses and non-alcoholic sangria served at both the cultural and scientific talks.

October: This meeting was held on October 10, 2000.

Velvet Torain reminded the DC to utilize the Weekly Events Calendar to advertise our activities. It was also suggested to have a back-up plan for sponsored programs in the event that a speaker has to cancel at the last minute or is delayed.

Velvet asked the committee members to think about the nomination process for the upcoming election for the Diversity Council. If anyone is interested in staying on the DC, contact Jennifer Anderson. Also, if anyone knows of anyone who is interested in becoming a member of the DC, contact Jennifer. We are encouraged to reflect on ways to improve/change/etc the sponsored events for the DC.

Training Committee - In an effort to solicit interest, the heads of the Federal Woman's Program and the NTA were contacted. No replies were received. Contract negotiations fell through for the consultant previously contacted to provide training. Therefore, the event previously scheduled for October 26, 2000 has been cancelled. A handout entitled "A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry" was provided. This handout gives a detailed description of the appreciative inquiry process. The Training Committee will continue to work on other venues for this activity.

Disability Awareness - There were eight teams competing in three informal activities - "Goal Ball", "Base Flashlight", and "Wheelchair obstacle course". Prizes were given for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishers. A formal program was held on 10/19. Stephanie Sjoblad, audiologist with UNC presented a talk entitled "Do You Hear What I Hear?" from 2:00 to 3:00 in Conference Room 101A. Some of the topics she covered were common hearing loss & hearing sensitivity; problems distinguishing words and consonants;

acoustics and hearing conditions; and communication techniques. The event was a huge success with standing room only attendance.

November: This meeting was held on November 20, 2000.

Velvet requested that any nominations be forwarded to Jennifer Anderson. Election for the Diversity Council will be held at the next meeting. A list of DC observances for the coming year was handed out and members were requested to sign up for at least two subcommittees. We once again were encouraged to reflect on ways to improve/change/etc the sponsored events for the DC.

WTVU has contacted Lou Rozier regarding some 'shots' on NIEHS, which would air around federal observed diversity celebrations. Lou requested Velvet to approach the DC regarding whether or not the DC would advise pursuing this plan. The plan consisted of: NIEHS will air a series of 10 commercial schedules throughout the year around suggested holidays; these 10 commercials will focus on suggested holidays emphasizing their importance to our diverse culture by giving pertinent facts; ABC 11 will produce these 10 commercials for NIEHS on an ongoing annual basis; NIEHS will get full approval of these 10 commercials before airing; in addition, ABC will air 20 vignettes in various dayparts around the suggested holidays. These vignettes will be aired as bookends with another. During the discussion, it was mentioned that the vignettes should cover all areas within NIEHS, including the outreach programs and not limited to the functions of the DC. After further discussion, the DC decided that this might be worth pursuing further. This decision will be relayed to Lou Rozier. Bill Grigg will then present the ABC 11 proposal to the Executive Committee. The DC will be kept informed about this issue through Tom Hawkins.

Native American Heritage - Activities were held throughout the month of November. There were four posters featuring questions about various tribes in the US; answers were provided after the seminar on 11/9. Speaker was Mr. Gregory Richardson, NC Commission of Indian Affairs and his presentation focused on the Haliwa-Saponi tribe. Dr. Sassaman (DETR) was the co-sponsor for this event and tied her talk in with the Native American Heritage theme by speaking about the various grants given to Native Americans. Music was played in the lobby on that day. Various recipe cards were placed on a table at the entrance of the cafeteria to share. Artifacts from UNC are displayed in the display case in the lobby of South Campus. Plans are also being made to borrow

different clothing worn by the Hillsborough Occoneechee Indian Tribe for display at the Institute on 11/29.

December: A list of DC observances for the coming year was handed out and members were again requested to sign up for at least two subcommittees. Velvet reminded us that the Committees for Women's History Month and Clerical/Administrative/Secretary Day need to start working on their plans.

WTVD has contacted Lou Rozier regarding some 'shots' on NIEHS, which would air around federal observed diversity celebrations. Lou requested Velvet to approach the DC regarding whether or not the DC would advise pursuing this plan. At the last meeting the DC held a discussion and decided that it might be worth pursuing this further. WTVD was suppose to be at the DC meeting, but will instead be at NIEHS on 12/18 at 10:30 in Rm. 3162. Anyone who is interested is encouraged to attend. The DC will be kept informed about this issue through Tom Hawkins.

International Day was held on 12/12 from 1:30 - 3:30. The focus was on four countries - India, Kenya, Taiwan, and Venezuela. In the display case outside the cafeteria, flags from these countries will be displayed with explanation of their colors, origin, etc. There will also be a tape played portraying international music. There was a Chinese name-writing booth, where people can have their name written in Chinese. One local vendor, Ten Thousand Villages in Raleigh will display various items from different countries. It was held in the hall outside of Conference C. Ethnic snacks will be provided at the end of the program.

Velvet thanked everyone for his or her participation in the DC this past year. All observances and programs were well received. Some of the accomplishments this year have been greater visibility, and more participation in events. The DC has successfully pulled outside people in support of their observances. We have achieved visibility through the web cite, write-ups in the Grapevine and Factor, and with better communication with Dr. Olden's office. Further discussion ensued as to how we could better the DC. Some suggestions were for the DC to have its own newsletter; have each member send out email to their respective offices (DIR, DERT, OM, etc) notifying of events; have fewer activities for each event; try to schedule observance for International Day earlier in the month. There was a recommendation for terms of office to be for a period of two years versus one year. Further discussion of the above recommendations will need to be held at future meetings.

